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CONTACT:

Louis G. Pukelis (312) 814-0778

Governor Quinn proclaims September as Campus Fire Safety Month in Illinois

*Focus on fire safety in college housing and 5th anniversary of the
'Look Up!' smoke-alarm awareness program launched by mom of fire victim*

CHICAGO – Governor Pat Quinn has proclaimed September is Campus Fire Safety Month in Illinois. Since 2000, nationally there have been 71 fatal off-campus fires that have claimed the lives of 102 students, plus many more that were injured, according to the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM).

One of those victims was Tanner Osborn, a 22-year-old college student who perished along with two other classmates in a 2005 Chicago apartment fire. The apartment where they were staying had no working smoke detectors.

Tanner's mother, Kathleen Moritz of Evergreen Park, Ill., has been on a quest to spread the message of fire safety to college students. Shortly after his death, she started *LOOK UP! Pay It Forward* as a way to remind college students to "look up" for working and properly placed smoke detectors in any student housing. The program marks its 5th anniversary this year.

Once a year, OSFM and *LOOK UP!* focus their outreach at a single Illinois-based college to help spread the message of fire safety to students. This year's effort will be held at Western Illinois University in Macomb on Wednesday, September 22nd, which would have been Tanner's 28th birthday. Governor Quinn also proclaimed the date as *LOOK UP! Pay It Forward Day* in Illinois.

Representatives from OSFM, *LOOK UP!*, Macomb Fire Department and WIU student volunteers will be canvassing student housing with fire prevention information and free smoke alarms. The campaign also will encourage students to take preventive measures such as making sure that they do not have overloaded electrical outlets, do not smoke while impaired, use proper cooking techniques and never leave candles burning unattended.

For more information about *LOOK UP! Pay It Forward*, or to receive free posters, please contact OSFM's Jessica Blackford at (217) 558-0324 or Jessica.blackford@illinois.gov.

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(Editor's Note: Media interested in attending the canvassing event are urged to meet OSFM and LOOK UP! officials at 9:45 a.m. September 22nd in WIU's Concourse. For more information about this media availability, please contact Louis Pukelis at (312) 814-0778 or louis.pukelis@illinois.gov.)